

TESTIMONY OF JAMES TORGESEN
LABOR/EMPLOYEE RELATIONS MANAGER, OFFICE OF HUMAN
RESOURCES

BEFORE THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

ON BILL NO. 13-01, APRIL 17, 2001

"GOOD MORNING, MY NAME IS JAMES TORGESEN AND I AM
HERE ON BEHALF OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE TO EXPRESS SUPPORT
FOR BILL NO. 13-01.

THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE DESIRES TO PROVIDE AN
OPPORTUNITY FOR LIEUTENANTS AND CAPTAINS WITHIN THE
COUNTY'S DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES TO
COLLECTIVELY BARGAIN OVER THEIR WAGES, HOURS AND
WORKING CONDITIONS. THIS BILL WOULD INCLUDE EMPLOYEES IN
THESE TWO JOB CLASSES IN THE EXISTING BARGAINING UNIT OF
EMPLOYEES IN THE RANK OF MASTER FIRE FIGHTER/RESCUER AND
BELOW. AS EMPLOYEES IN THESE TWO CLASSES WORK CLOSELY
WITH EXISTING BARGAINING UNIT MEMBERS IN THE DAY TO DAY
OPERATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT THERE IS EVIDENCE OF A
COMMUNITY OF INTEREST IN THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF
EMPLOYMENT BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS. MOREOVER, MANY OF

THE TERMS OF THE EXISTING AGREEMENT HAVE BEEN PASSED THROUGH TO THESE EMPLOYEES.

EXTENDING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING RIGHTS TO THIS GROUP OF EMPLOYEES IS NOT INCONSISTENT WITH THE TREATMENT OF SIMILAR EMPLOYEES IN OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENT JURISDICTIONS IN THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE METROPOLITAN AREA." AS NOTED IN THE LEGISLATIVE REQUEST REPORT, THE SAME STRUCTURE AS PROPOSED EXISTS IN BALTIMORE COUNTY AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA. OTHER JURISDICTIONS INCLUDING HOWARD COUNTY, PRINCE GEORGES COUNTY AND BALTIMORE CITY EXTEND BARGAINING RIGHTS TO SIMILAR CLASSES AS A PART OF A NON-SUPERVISORY UNIT OR AS A SEPARATE UNIT.

THE BILL DOES CONTAIN A SERIES OF EXCLUSIONS WHICH WE FEEL ARE NECESSARY FOR THE EFFECTIVE OPERATION OF THE DEPARTMENT AND WILL HELP AVOID THE POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICTS OF INTEREST. IN THE MAIN, THESE ASSIGNMENTS HAVE TO DO WITH THE PERSONNEL, FINANCIAL AND POLICY ADMINISTRATION WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT.

AS THE COUNTY IS COMPLETING THE SECOND YEAR OF A THREE YEAR AGREEMENT WITH THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY CAREER FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION, IAFF LOCAL 1664, THE

PASSAGE OF THIS BILL WOULD EXTEND THE OPPORTUNITY FOR
LIEUTENANTS AND CAPTAINS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE BARGAINING
PROCESS THIS FALL. COVERAGE UNDER A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING
AGREEMENT WOULD THEN TAKE EFFECT WITH THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF A NEW AGREEMENT AS OF JULY 1, 2002.

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE TESTIMONY
ON THIS PROPOSED BILL AND WE WOULD REQUEST THAT YOU
FAVORABLY CONSIDER ITS PASSAGE.

